The VINDICATED method for diagnosing motor problems:

Valves – gaskets, o-rings, intake valve, exhaust valve…

Intake- fuel or air and the associated filters

Nuts and Bolts- check everything is tight

Distributor Cap- check it for cracks (can often be the cause of mysterious engine issues)

Ignition- starter, spark plugs, battery…

Cooling System Check- radiator, and all fluid levels, oil cooling, fins, cracks in hoses…

Alternator- over charging the battery can boil batteries dry…

Timing- check the timing for pistons, pumps etc… also check idling

Electronic- fuses, wiring, ignition wires

Document- check documentation for standard upkeep (brakes, fluid level changes, belts, tires)